Isaac stays home as mayors gather in New York

Isaac: Headed mayors group from 1990 to 1991.

By **Ray Flack**
Denver Bureau

This week, 1,500 mayors and city staff members are meeting in Manhattan, N.Y..

They were supposed to meet in Colorado Springs — until Amendment 2. When the U.S. Conference of Mayors pulled out of the Springs in January, it became the city's biggest convention loss due to the boycott.

The five-day event, which ends Tuesday, is expected to generate up to $600,000 in business for New York City.

But few other conventions followed the mayors' lead over Amendment 2. The Colorado Bar Association decided to stay put in Colorado Springs, as did the Colorado League of Women Voters. The convention of 600 lawyers is expected to pump about $500,000 into the local economy.

Terry Sullivan, executive director of the Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau, estimated the city has lost about $3 million in total convention business since passage of Amendment 2, which would prohibit laws protecting homosexuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation. The figure covers events through 1995, he said.

Besides the mayors conference, the city lost 18 smaller conventions.

On the other hand, Sullivan said, summer tourism visits could be on the upswing. "We have had more requests for visitor information about family-oriented features in the area to date than we had in all of 1992," he said.

In response to the mayors' boycott, Springs Mayor Robert Isaac is shunning the New York convention. Isaac, who was president of the group from 1990 to 1991, said he believes other mayors moved the convention unfairly.

Asked if he has any special plans in lieu of attending the convention, Isaac declined comment.

He said he had nothing to add to the biting criticism he made when the mayors decided to boycott Colorado Springs.

"It's old news," he said. "I don't do like the media does. I don't churn over those things that have already happened."

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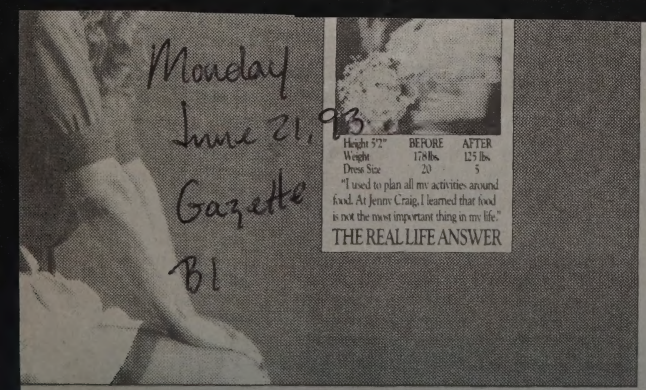

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